

For the past thirty years America has had little opportunity indeed to influence Soviet policy. We were in a position at the time of recognition in 1933 and at several of the wartime conferences with Soviet leaders to ask for and get information not usually made available, and in some cases to make suggestions on Soviet policy. But such opportunities have arisen only at crucial times when the fabric of the Soviet internal political system had been torn by cataclysmic events, or, when overwhelming need on the part of the Russians for something we were in a position to give them made them amenable to unusual approaches. Usually we are lucky to keep ourselves informed as to what Soviet policy is.

Stalin's death would, in my opinion, tear the fabric of Soviet administrative machinery and perpetrate situations which will make it possible for us to influence Soviet policy, if we go about it right. The news, when it comes, will probably be sudden as it is unlikely that the world will be told that he is critically ill; indeed the news may not be released until some time after his death. So that whatever we are going to do about it must be planned in advance.

The major considerations are these:

There is no precedent for the legal succession of power in the Soviet Union. After Lenin's death there was a fight in which the political testament of Lenin was seized by one of the heirs apparent who suppressed it and consolidated power by the systematic and often physical destruction of competitors. There was a strong politburo in 1923 - it contained probably more first rate minds than it does today. Lenin was perfectly conscious of the danger of the struggle for power and tried in every way to avoid it.

Nevertheless the struggle came, and it shook the Soviet government to its foundations, Stalin is supposed like Lenin to have prepared a political testament. (He is reported to have told Roosevelt as much in Teheran over martinis). Yet it seems unlikely that a coalition, trimvirate or quadriumvirate could long remain in power in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. There will almost certainly be a struggle for power. Off hand I should say the main contestants would be Malenkov, Molotov, Beria.

This struggle for power has almost certainly already begun and probably is reflected in altercations like that which is now known to have raged between Malenkov and Zhdanov a couple of years ago. After Stalin's death the chances of more open conflict increase.

On the other hand, the politburo knows that its unity is its major asset, that if it allows quarrels to shake the basis of its authority they will all lose their heads.

Thus on Stalin's death two conflicting considerations will influence the activities of members of the politburo and others in the Soviet hierarchy: (a) To maintain unity (b) To survive personally, i.e., to grab more power, or at least be on the winning side in the struggle.

American interests require the destruction of unity in the politburo, the fostering of suspicions, animosities or conflicts for power among Stalin's successors, and finally the support of the least dangerous of the competitors in order to aid him to liquidate the others. We must drive the members of the politburo to fight for power by leading them to believe others are doing so and are plotting their downfall. To accomplish these aims a campaign plan is necessary. The campaign plan must, in the first instance, be based on information.

I am convinced, on the basis of considerable wandering around the D.P. camps of Germany and Austria and fairly consistent perusal of appropriate publications, that there are at large in the Western world today a number of people who know where the potential animosities in the politburo lie. This information should be gathered into one place for the use of whoever is planning the campaign under discussion.

Next, preparatory work should be carried on:

1. Soviet population should be told repeatedly that Stalin, an old and ailing man, may soon die and that his various lieutenants are already beginning to struggle for his mantle of power. This function can well be carried out by the Voice of America.
2. Provocative misinformation should be allowed to fall into the hands of Soviet authorities revealing intrigues on the part of various Soviet officials with Foreign individuals and organizations bargaining for help in the coming struggle for power after Stalin's death. Such information must be carefully planned out in order to be plausible, and in order that the allegations should not be immediately disprovable.
3. Overt offers, directly or through third powers, for cooperation in a post-war struggle for power should be made to Soviet officials deemed most likely to be interested.

In cases of rejection these stories might then be broadcast over the Voice of America or other agencies as simple pieces of information, e.g. "It has been learned on good authority that representatives of the "X" party in Turkey approached the Soviet ambassador with offers of aid in the struggle which is expected to develop in Moscow on Stalin's death. The offers were said to have been rejected although the Ambassador himself

refuses to affirm or deny the story." Such items if repeated month after month would, in my opinion, create a very definite nervousness in both official and unofficial circles in the Soviet Union. Besides, there is always the possibility that some of the officials approached might accept the offer of aid. This would open possibilities for penetrating the Soviet apparatus.

In these and other activities Soviet refugees now in Western Europe and the Middle East can be extremely useful. Preparations should now be made for small but highly trained and competent units of Russian or other Soviet refugees, perhaps under American leadership, to proceed by plane or other means of transportation to vulnerable points in the Soviet Union at the time of Stalin's death or a crisis immediately following it to lend support to one or another of the competitors for power. While such operations would be of negligible military significance they might be of tremendous political importance particularly if they were publicized both by outside agencies like the Voice of America and by their own radio stations or publications.

(An operation of this kind was planned by a small group of officers of the R.C.A. in Dobbendorf near Berlin in 1943 and 1944. The Gestapo became suspicious of the unit, most of whom were shot, but at least one survivor I think is to be found in the Munich area and might be able to comment interestingly on plans made at that time. These plans I believe involved a parachute descent in the prison camp area near Murmansk.)

If appropriate preparations are made well in advance, and planning is well done it is conceivable that we might be able to provoke an open fight for power among Stalin's successors at his death. If successful, this operation would at the very least hamstring Soviet foreign policy;

at best it might bring down the whole structure of the Soviet Administrative machine in a series of violent conflicts which would render it impotent.

I am quite aware that campaigns such as the one just referred to are quite beyond the authority of the Voice of America. At the same time someone has to take the initiative in starting such projects and the Voice of America would have a very considerable part in the development of such a campaign.

I realize further that a cardinal function of the Voice is to sell America by telling the truth about it, a subject which I have not mentioned, not because I don't recognize its importance, but because one can't write everything in a few pages.

I am likewise aware that the possibilities of open conflict between ourselves and the Soviet Union in 1951 for example are at least as great as Stalin's death during this year. This obviously involves the necessity of planning for a vastly different situations. I wrote in more detail about the latter circumstance because I believe the issue is less well recognized and because it emphasizes the pith of all our psychological warfare planning and operations - to drive wedges between the government of the Soviet Union and its people, between the USSR and its satellites and their peoples, and to destroy their unity while preserving our own.

TOP SECRET

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